

Unemployment Insurance Act

say that he is prepared to include the beneficial items in this bill.

There is no one in the House who would like to go home for Christmas more than I do. I would certainly like to go home tomorrow because I have five small children at home. But in no way can I in good conscience let the minister get away with this subterfuge. All he has to do now is to rise in his place—but he is not interested in doing that because he wants to chat with that chatterbox from the Maritimes. He is not prepared to bring in those beneficial clauses. I know that members on the other side are concerned about that. I am sure that they come from parts of the country much like mine where people have problems with unemployment insurance when they cannot voluntarily suspend their claims or extend the qualifying period. I am also sure they have problems with claimants who want to appeal to the umpire but cannot afford the travel expenses to reach the place where the umpire is holding court. We are remiss if we are not prepared to insist that the minister include the beneficial clauses in the bill.

We have tried to examine this bill as closely as possible, and we have made our concrete and positive proposals in committee and at report stage. Now we have come to the last clause in the bill, which is the crunch. We appeal to the minister to include these particular beneficial clauses in the bill so that at least the edge will be taken off the negative clauses in the bill. I can say no more than to call on the minister to do that, and to give the House some assurance that these measures will be brought in on January 1, 1976. He owes it to the people of Canada because the government, in effect, has been the cause of high unemployment in the country. Surely he should be the one to rise in the House to say that at least the beneficial and progressive items in the bill will come into effect on January 1, 1976.

● (1600)

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, it has been a long debate with a great deal of repetition, and I have gained great respect for the hon. member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez), his vehemence, and his articulate ability to convey his point of view. In the words of, I think, Carlyle, the hon. member is someone who is often in error but never in doubt.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Andras: With regard to timing, the Bill C-69 provision which will become effective with Royal Assent is the insurability of LIP and LEAP individual sponsors, which is Clause 38(3).

Mr. Rodriguez: You are cutting that out.

Mr. Andras: No, we are not cutting out LIP. The hon. member for Nickel Belt is partly correct with regard to some of the clauses which will become effective—I want to be precise about this—on January 1 or January 4. There is still some problem about those two or three days because some of these affect the benefit cycle. The hon. member is correct about the increase in the period of disqualification, the dependency rate, the repeal of coverage of persons 65 years of age, and the repeal of the advance pay.

[Mr. Rodriguez.]

The voluntary termination of claims, however, will be effective on the same date, either January 1 or January 4. The new financing threshold will be in effect then. There are quite a few of what I call housekeeping amendments. One could choose which are beneficial and which will take effect then.

I wish to make reference to an amendment to the act which was contained in Bill C-16, that is, the flexibility in the payment of maternity benefits. It will be effective on February 1. I say to the hon. member that there is no plot in this; it simply is a problem of computer programming. That bill was given Royal Assent on July 30, and the computer programming, procedures, guidelines, and staff training were not completed in time to make that effective before February 1. I regret that, but that is the problem.

The flexibility in the payment of sickness benefits, which is by proclamation, and the extension of the qualifying period, the 104 weeks, are going to take computer re-programming. We cannot authorize the commission to expend what is some money involved in that until Royal Assent, and I am not trying to bamboozle the hon. member. It is a practical problem. The officials think it may take a few months to do that. I can only say that I will be watching very closely and pressing them to bring this into effect as quickly as possible. Those are the facts as we see them now.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner (London East)): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner (London East)): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner (London East)): Those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. Members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner (London East)): Those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. Members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner (London East)): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner (London East)): Call in the members.

The House divided on motion No. 22 (Mr. Rodriguez) which was negatived on the following division: